

# LATIN NOTES

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Address communications to Frances E. Sabin, Director of the Bureau

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## READING LATIN IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

To plunge at once *in medias res*, let me say that I am going to speak about reading Latin from the very first day the children in the Junior High School come into the Latin class. This is an experiment that we have been carrying on in the school from which I come, the Franklin K. Lane High School of Brooklyn, New York. I must not take credit for the idea myself; my principal, Mr. Charles E. Springmeyer, said to me: "Why should pupils not read easy Latin from the outset, as they do easy French and Spanish? Why should they not learn their forms and grammar from observing the usage of interesting Latin narrative? Why not postpone many more grammatical principles to later years, and thus make room for learning to read?"

These questions were asked nearly a year before the famous Report of the Classical Investigation was published. This Report, as you know, advocates precisely these principles—connected reading from the beginning of the course, fewer grammatical principles in first year work, and less emphasis on formal grammatical terminology. As I was very sympathetic with these ideas, Mr. Springmeyer obtained for me, although I belong to the Senior High School, permission to teach a class in the Junior High School, in order to try out a new type of elementary Latin work. The salient feature of our course is the introduction of a Latin Reader as a textbook from the very beginning of the work, and the devotion of at least a third of the time to reading. The experiment, at least from the point of view of the teacher, has been a delight. The enrollment in Junior High School Latin has nearly doubled since the new plan went into effect, although the students are free to choose any one of three languages. This fact appears to indicate that the little boy who began Latin last term reports favorably on his choice to his next-door neighbor, who is thereby moved to elect the same language, when it comes to be his turn.

I ought to say further that the work that I have been doing is still in the experimental stage; we have proved that first year Latin can be made more interesting and vital by the extended use of subject-matter with human interest; but we do not claim that we have shown conclusively that our reading method gives the best preparation for advanced work. The class with which I commenced to use this plan will not begin second year high school Latin till February; if, next April, we find that these children are doing a little better than classes trained in the old way—that they are reading the "Argonauts" and Caesar somewhat more easily, extracting the thought-content from the Latin text more quickly and intelligently, showing "more power to read Latin," in the phrase of the day—then we shall claim that our case is proved. Meanwhile there are two things I say with confidence: first, none of these pupils have at any time shown any fear of attacking a Latin sentence; and, second, they never take the dull, unintelligent attitude of being satisfied with mere words regardless of the sense. With the cheerful confidence of

children who have never been browbeaten by impossible tasks, they assume that the Latin *means* something. Such an assumption is a good portent for their success with Caesar and Cicero; it has not always been characteristic of classes I have taught, some of whom have seemed, on the contrary, rather pessimistic about there being any sense in a paragraph of Latin!

I remember when I was thirteen years old, and beginning French, that we had a reading lesson the very first day. It was about a certain Mlle. Bella, "qui allait à l'école!" I went home full of pride and joy, because I was actually reading French! I have always believed that the stimulus that came to me that day had a large part in keeping me ever since, faithfully pursuing that elusive and charming language, and diligently trying to improve my acquaintance with it.

Now just that element of interest in the young pupil is not to be neglected. To foster it is not sentimentality, but the soundest pedagogy. We Latinists have long handicapped ourselves in competition with the teachers of modern languages. We have been conscientious and serious and perhaps logical, but certainly not psychological, when we have introduced children to this stately and elegant language of which we are the prophets, by teaching them, first, the list of cases; then, the first declension and a few barren, numbered sentences. Could one expect much of a thrill to communicate itself to little Miss and Master Junior High School from that sort of lesson? Whenever the thrill did come, as it sometimes did, it came in spite of the handicap, through a good teacher or through a young mind that naturally loved language.

The Latin reading for such a course as ours must necessarily be very easy at the outset, and very carefully graded through Latin of increasing difficulty, so that it may lead directly into the type of Latin read in second year high school. In New York State the latter consists of Ritchie's "Argonauts" and selections from the first and second books of Caesar. My Junior High School class which will enter second year high school in February, is now reading Ritchie's arrangement of the myths of Perseus and Hercules with no great difficulty. So I have high hopes that I shall prove to be a successful liaison officer between Junior and Senior High School Latin.

I am not here, naturally, to advocate the use of any particular reading book. Great numbers of delightful elementary Latin Readers are published and used in England. You will find lists of such readers in the Report of the Classical Investigation (Part I, pp. 144-148). At the Service Bureau for Classical Teachers at Teachers College, you may see single copies of all of these books. The publishers in this country are beginning to bring out similar material. In our school we have had great success with an admirable little reader of Macmillan's, called "Julia." We use this for the first two terms of a three-term Junior High School course. In the second and third terms we also use Gallup's Latin Reader and the Junior Latin Reader of

Scott and Sanford. There is good material, too, in the Bible stories of the Vulgate. Any one who has access to a typewriter and mimeograph can put an ample amount of reading material in the hands of the pupils. Just now I am preparing copies of the story of Joseph, in chapters, for the use of the third-term class.

A word as to our procedure with the beginners. The teacher read the first sentence of "Julia," and invited comments on the difference between Latin and English pronunciation. The comments were keen and accurate. Then a pupil read the sentence and translated it, with help, into English. He was encouraged to get the meaning of the words from comparison with the English, whenever possible; if there was no such clue, some pupil looked the word up in the special vocabulary. The teacher remarked that if a noun had *m* attached to it, it was likely to be the object of the verb. This helped a great deal, for in that first paragraph of 15 lines, the *m* words occurred 18 times. The word *accusative* was not once mentioned, but the class got enough drill from that one reading lesson to fix the chief force of the case (for most of them) forever.

From the same paragraph they learned that *t* at the end of a verb meant *he, she, or it*, and that *nt* meant *they*. The sentence, "*Saepe Julia nautis rosas dat,*" we translated first without any inflectional meanings, "Often Julia sailors roses gives." Well, does it mean, "Julia gives roses to the sailors," or "Julia gives sailors to the roses?" Which is more sensible? The children all laughed and used their common-sense, a quality which older children sometimes forget to use in dealing with Caesar and Cicero.

Meanwhile, lessons proceeded slowly in the regular First Year Book, and soon we came across the dative plural ending *is* and I reminded the pupils of the *nautis* to whom "Julia gave the roses." But I want to make the point that these children were reading little paragraphs of Latin intelligently, before they had studied all the cases or knew their names, or had had a complete noun-paradigm.

After such a reading lesson as this, the passage was assigned for review at home. The next day in class, it was reviewed in various ways. Most often, the teacher paraphrased the content of the paragraph, the children listening with books closed and translating, sentence by sentence, the Latin they heard. This method has been extremely successful and very popular with the pupils.

Occasionally, in a new reading lesson, instead of an accurate word-by-word translation, I have had silent reading and have tested comprehension of the passage by a set of carefully prepared questions on the content. This practice is followed only now and then, for I feel that accurate interpretation and attention to distinct words and syllables is a habit indispensable for continued success. I know that many sound teachers are heartily in favor of the extensive use of such comprehension tests, but it seems to me that translation is the more valuable preparation for more advanced work.

My procedure, then, to summarize, is as follows: the new reading lesson is always done first in class; the teacher or pupil reads the Latin; the pupil translates, with as much help as is needed from teacher and classmates; the Latin word order is always followed in the first translation, and then changed, but only so far as is necessary to conform to natural English usage.

If such work is done systematically, and made an integral part of the Latin curriculum, we feel that the ancient gulf may at last be bridged—the gulf between first year and second year Latin, beside which so many of us have sat and wept in our youth. To find time for all this reading, it is, of course, necessary to reduce the amount of grammatical material assigned to the elementary course. In our school, we have transferred the study of the subjunctive and all its uses to the second year. In the New York State Syllabus no irregular

verbs are assigned in first year work except *sum* and *possum*. Yet I have known teachers who went on, automatically, teaching *eo, fero*, and the whole brood of *volo* and its compounds, years after they had been banished from the Syllabus! I have heard people advocate, even within the last few months, the introduction of more grammar into the first year work, in order to allow time to teach translation methods in the second year. This appears to me a most wasteful method. It means attempting to teach grammar in a vacuum,—illustrating difficult syntactical points, such as indirect questions, by half a dozen barren isolated sentences. The futility of the method that includes a large number of formal grammatical principles in the elementary stages of learning is shown by some interesting figures on the degree of proficiency attained. We learn that only 26% of the pupils can use or identify the dative with *persuadeo*; 17%, the passive periphrastic conjugation, while 4% only show even a bowing acquaintance with the indirect question. Surely any system that produces such results as these in knowledge of formal syntax, while at the same time giving no training in the reading of Latin, is sadly in need of revision.

Time can also be found for reading by the reduction of the amount of composition. Composition, it appears to me, should not be done at all in Junior High School work except in class under supervision. Two sentences written in class after careful analysis, and immediately corrected, are far more valuable in fixing knowledge than ten, merely assigned for homework and brought to class, bristling with mistakes. "Completion exercises" furnish all the practice really needed in writing Latin at this stage of progress.

The quickness of the children in reading elementary Latin would amaze anyone who saw it for the first time. I persuaded a teacher in my own Senior Department to try our little Reader with a class in first year Latin. She was very reluctant and sceptical at first about the ability of children to read before they had mastered at least the first declension. However, she tried it, largely to please me, and I think she was astonished at the response. But is it not true that a child who can identify fifteen types of automobile as fast as they flash by on the road, could also, as far as intelligence goes, observe differences in word-endings and catch the drift of thought in a paragraph of a simple story?

In all intelligent reading, English as much as any other, the thought of one sentence is an aid in the comprehension of the next sentence. The comprehension of sentence (a) sets the mind in the right direction to see the force of (b); (b) does the same for (c). In teaching children Latin we have been ignoring this principle. We have been drilling them on detached sentences entirely unconnected as regards content, and devoid of human interest, mere wire forms on which to drape rules. Then, after a year or a year and a half of this, we have put them at an author, and a difficult author at that, and we have expected them, by means of their assorted set of dative and ablative uses, to grasp real language, to carry over the content of one sentence to the next and so extract actual ideas out of a page of Latin. This is an impossible task to master, without systematic and continuous practice in reading material graded from the very simple to the more complex and difficult, which, from the very simple beginning, tells a story or carries a thread of thought from one sentence to the next.

Our claim, then, seems a very reasonable one. We hope our pupils will learn to read Latin with some proficiency as they advance into the upper grades of the high school and into college; therefore we propose to teach them now, at the beginning, to read easy Latin as a preparation for reading difficult Latin later. Little



children do not learn to read English by a long preparatory course in English syntax; they learn by doing it. *Faciendo discitur* is as true in this field as in all others. William James says of habit-formation, "No matter how full a reservoir of maxims one may possess, . . . if one have not taken advantage of every concrete opportunity to act, one's character may remain entirely unaffected for the better." I am tempted to paraphrase the words of the great psychologist, "No matter how many paradigms one may know, or how many rules of syntax, unless he be given opportunity to read Latin, the source whence all such paradigms and rules were derived, his powers to comprehend and appreciate the new language will be quite unaffected for the better."

—Dr. MARGARET Y. HENRY,

Chairman of Dept. of Latin,

Franklin K. Lane High School, Brooklyn

(Read at the meeting of the Classical Association of New Jersey, at Atlantic City, N. J., Oct. 12, 1925).

### A PRIVATE INITIATIVE LIBRARY FOR THE LATIN TEACHER'S ROOM

Books of interest to first and second year pupils

A revision by Emma G. Brelesford of Cleveland, Ohio, of a list found in the files of the Service Bureau for Classical Teachers

#### I. First Semester

##### A. Latin Texts

1. Place's *Beginning Latin*; American Book Co.
2. D'Ooge's *Elements of Latin*; Ginn and Co.
3. Ullman and Henry's *Elementary Latin*; Macmillan Co.
4. Whittemore's *Elementa Prima*; John C. Winston Co.
5. Smith's *Elementary Latin*; Allyn and Bacon.
6. Scott's *First Latin Lessons*; Scott, Foresman and Co.
7. Jenner and Grant's *A First Year of Latin*; Benj. H. Sanborn and Co.
8. Chickering's *Latin Reader*; Scribner's Sons.
9. Nutting's *Latin Primer*; American Book Co.

##### B. Easy Latin Readers

1. Godley's *Fables of Orbius*, Part I; Edward Arnold, London.
2. Beresford's *Latin Reader, Part I*; Blackie and Sons, London.
3. Reed's *Julia*; Macmillan Co.
4. Spencer's *Scalae Primae*; Bell and Sons, London.
5. Downing's *Oral Latin*; P. J. Downing, Lawrence-Smith School, N. Y.
6. Scudder's *Elementary Latin Reader*; Allyn and Bacon.

##### C. Vocabulary Studies

1. Gray's *Pupils' Companion to High School Latin, Part II* (especially pp. 131-136); East High School, Rochester, N. Y.
2. Weekley's *Romance of Words*; E. P. Dutton and Co.

##### D. Books in English Dealing with Background

1. Winslow's *Our Little Carthaginian Cousins of Long Ago*; Page and Co.
2. J. D. Cowles's *Our Little Roman Cousins of Long Ago*; Page and Co.

3. Bulfinch's *Age of Fable*; T. Y. Crowell Co.
4. Johnston's *Private Life of the Romans*; Scott, Foresman and Co.
5. McDaniel's *Roman Private Life*; Marshall Jones Co.
6. Guerber's *Story of the Romans*; American Book Co.
7. Guerber's *Myths of Greece and Rome*; American Book Co.
8. Tatlock's *Myths of Greece and Rome*; Century Co.
9. Hutchinson's *The Muses Pageant*; E. P. Dutton and Co.
10. Hall's *Buried Cities*; Macmillan Co.

#### II. Second Semester

##### A. Latin Readers

1. Beresford's *Latin Reader, Part II*; Blackie and Sons, London.
2. Gallup's *Latin Reader*; American Book Co.
3. Paine and Mainwaring's *Primus Annus*; Oxford University Press, New York.
4. Paine, Mainwaring and Ryle's *Decem Fabulae*; Oxford University Press, New York Branch.
5. Ritchie's *Fabulae Faciles*; Longmans, Green and Co.
6. Reed's *Camilla*; Macmillan Co.
7. Collar's *The New Gradatim*; Ginn and Co.
8. Newman's *Easy Latin Plays*; G. Bell and Sons.
9. Morton's *Legends of the Gods and Heroes*; Macmillan Co.
10. Whitehead's *Standard Bearer*; American Book Co.

##### B. Books in English Dealing with Background

1. Haaren and Poland's *Famous Men of Rome*; American Book Co.
2. Tappan's *Story of the Roman People*; Houghton, Mifflin Co.
3. Lang's *Tales of Greece and Troy*; Longmans, Green and Co.
4. Shumway's *A Day in Ancient Rome*; D. C. Heath and Co.
5. Gayley's *Classic Myths*; Ginn and Co.

#### III. Third Semester

##### A. Latin Readers

1. Beresford's *Latin Reader, Part III*; Blackie and Sons, London.
2. D'Ooge's *Easy Latin for Sight Reading*; Ginn and Co.
3. Greenstock's *Single Term Latin Reader, Books II and III*; Rivington, London.
4. Lowe's *Caesar in Britain*; Oxford University Press, New York.
5. Mainwaring and Paine's *Secundus Annus*; Oxford University Press, N. Y.
6. Schlicher's *Latin Plays*; Ginn and Co.
7. Moore's *Porta Latina*; Ginn and Co.
8. Nutting's *Latin Reader*; American Book Co.
9. Scott and Sanford's *Junior Latin Reader*; Scott, Foresman and Co.
10. Rolfe and Dennison's *Latin Reader*; Allyn and Bacon.

11. Paxson's *Latin Plays*; Ginn and Co.
12. Allen's *Tales of the Roman Republic, Parts I and II*; Oxford University Press, New York Branch.
13. Appleton and Jones's *Puer Romanus*; Oxford University Press.
14. Appleton and Jones's *Pons Tiro-num*; Oxford University Press.
15. Appleton's *Fabulae*; G. Bell and Sons, London.

#### B. Vocabulary Studies

1. Carr and Scott's *Development of Language*; Scott, Foresman and Co.

#### C. Books in English Dealing with Background

1. Lovell's *Stories in Stone from the Roman Forum*; Macmillan Co.
2. McCartney's *Warfare by Land and Sea*; Marshall Jones Co.
3. *Plutarch's Lives*; Everyman's Library; E. P. Dutton and Co.
4. Davis's *Readings from Roman History*; Allyn and Bacon.
5. Allison's *Children of the Way*; Harcourt, Brace and Co.
6. White's *The Unwilling Vestal*; E. P. Dutton and Co.
7. White's *The Song of the Siren*; E. P. Dutton and Co.
8. White's *Andivius Hedulio*; E. P. Dutton and Co.
9. Davis's *A Friend of Caesar*; Macmillan Co.
10. Davis's *A Victor of Salamis*; Macmillan Co.

### IV. Fourth Semester

#### A. Latin Readers

1. Bice's *Sight Reading in Latin*; Ginn and Co.
2. Arnold's *Cothurnulus*; G. Bell and Sons, London.
3. *New Testament in Latin*.

#### B. Books in English Dealing with Background

1. Well's *With Caesar's Legions*; Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, Boston.
2. Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii*; Everyman's Library, E. P. Dutton and Co.
3. Conan Doyle's *The Last Galley*; Doubleday, Page and Co.
4. Wallace's *Ben Hur*; Harper Bros.
5. Mitchison's *The Conquered*; Harcourt, Brace and Co.
6. Ward-Fowler's *Life of Caesar*; Macmillan Co.
7. T. Rice Holmes's *Caesar's Conquest of Gaul* (Selections); Macmillan Co. (Out of print, but old copies may sometimes be obtained.)
8. Sihler's *Annals of Caesar*; G. E. Stechert.

NOTE: Many of these books will be found suitable for other semesters than the one in which they are listed. LATIN NOTES SUPPLEMENT XI should be consulted for detailed information regarding Latin Readers.

### MATERIAL AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION

The numbering is continued from the October issue. This material is lent to teachers upon payment of postage or is sold for five cents per item unless otherwise indicated.

140. Lecture notes on Cicero.
141. Illustrations of "problems" designed for review work in a Caesar class. Prepared by S. Alice Toole, Perry, N. Y.
142. Interesting Latin passages from the *Life of Alexander the Great* by Quintus Curtius Rufus. May be used to advantage in the third year. Selected by Annie White Marshall, Birmingham, Ala.
143. A short list of Latin papers published in various high schools.
144. Suggestions for major topics in a summer course for the training of Latin Teachers. Prepared for use at Teachers College in 1925.

LATIN NOTES SUPPLEMENT XI—Latin narrative in the first two years—what the English textbooks have to offer. Prepared by Mary Breene, Pittsburgh, Pa.; 10 cents.

### NOTICE

The publication of the booklets dealing with Roman Life, which have been advertised in LATIN NOTES, has been delayed. However, it is hoped that these may be ready by the middle of November at the latest.

The first issue of "Little Studies in Greek" will be sent out about the second week in November—possibly sooner. Persons who wish to receive these should send their names at once.

The preparation of important material left over from last year as well as of much which has been secured since that time is proceeding as fast as the facilities of the Bureau permit.

### INFORMATION CONCERNING EQUIPMENT

Lantern slides dealing with the Aeneid may be secured from Mr. A. Bruderhausen, 1309 Webster Ave., New York. The set consists of 75 and may be purchased for \$30.00. Single slides may be secured for 50 cents. Arrangements may be made for renting sets. Slides dealing with other subjects are in process of preparation. For further information, address Mr. Bruderhausen.

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1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:  
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2. This leaflet is published by the Service Bureau for Classical Teachers which is supported by the American Classical League. FRANCES SABIN is the Director.

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FRANCES E. SABIN,

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 17th day of September, 1924.

C. H. POMEROY,

My commission expires March 30, 1927.)